

Legacy Now Youth Panel Being Part Of It

The Legacy Now Youth Panel, a unique initiative, brings together 14–19 year olds from the five Olympic boroughs who would not normally meet. The Panel feeds back regularly to the Legacy Agencies and Masterplanners to constructively critique the Olympic Legacy Masterplans. The Youth Panel are amazing young people who generously give up their time to help shape the built environment of east London. Through sessions with Fundamental they have familiarised themselves with the Olympic site; its stages of development and the master vision for the Olympic Park.

They have created a manifesto setting out their priorities for change, as well as engaging in talks about the nature of the different areas they know which they consider successful or unsuccessful currently, and the changes and innovations that they feel are needed to achieve their vision for the future of the site.

The Legacy Now Youth Panel hosted a large public youth event as part of the CREATE Festival in July 09. Leading up to this, the group were involved in two major creative projects; developing a multimedia video and light projection show to communicate the Legacy Masterplan, and creating a soundscape for a graphic flythrough of the Legacy City.

Being part of Panel, the experiences, the learning, the new activities and opportunities to express views and to make a difference to the 2012 urban planning, has had a profound effect on the young people involved. The young people surprised themselves, and others with their achievements. The quotes below, from evaluation case studies, show how panel members feel that being part of the Legacy Now Youth Panel has changed their lives for the better.



It's our time, look to the future, look East!



Changing Minds

'The LDA, people with power, they've taken on our ideas, and we've seen changes. They've reduced the number of alleyways. They've put more lighting in the parks...'

'With the roadshows, we go to different places in London that people will come through. People at the start fill out leaflets and pass on ideas on the games. When people come in we show them the 40 year plan, and show how it will happen bit by bit. Lots of people were negative. The people who came to speak to us changed their ideas. If someone was to approach me I wouldn't have been able to explain an organisation, and what it does, and handed out leaflets. They are regenerating all of the boroughs to make them look better. I understand more why things take so long. It's not because everyone can't be bothered. It's just that you've got to take steps.'

Being Experts

'The Legacy Now Panel, we have contributed what's missing, what's not working. The whole area issue about the six neighbourhoods and the postcodes, and how to bring them together.'

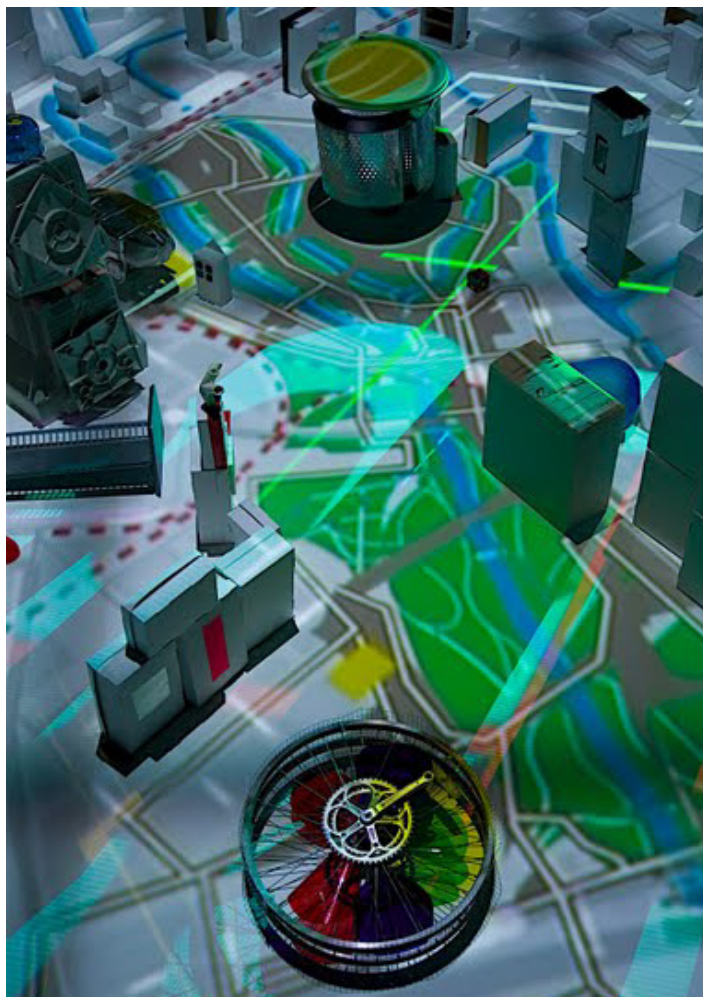
'Knowledge, we have so much knowledge. Adults are really shocked by the knowledge that young people have. When we have meetings with organisations, they are like; 'wow' you know stuff! We are younger, but we have a grasp of the knowledge because we are insiders. It's just the whole opportunity of being on this panel that had an impact on the Olympic Park. We are going to be using it, so I wanted to get involved. We focus on the aftermath, at the end of the day, it's our future. We have the real life experiences that the people who work in the planning offices have never had, or have forgotten. Because of the whole planning, legacy, plan, plans, if the area is created in a certain way, you are more likely to have more crime in that area. It is important.'



Feeling Informed

'I speak up more in public. I do it with information, and details, so I do it more effectively. It is boosting my confidence, making me meet people in that field, like planners.'

'I have actually changed. I am looking at things with a broader perspective. Everything is changing up to and around us and how we can make it. I didn't know that's how decisions are made. It's a good thing, to see the reality. I think other young people should know about it as well. So they can see how it's really done, so when they go to college, they can have a head-start. It is like a taster of all of the different opportunities that I could get into. I knew that multi-media jobs existed, but I never knew how big it could be. I have seen plans before but this is totally different. I have more respect for architects; they have a higher knowledge. I know what's happening in different places, different things, and communities are not all the same.'



Creative, Critical, Curious

'People are more willing to listen to me, because I believe that what I have to say is important and relevant somehow.'

'I think I am more creative, because they (the project) were willing to listen to me, and put my ideas into practice, and that makes more ideas come. For example, it was my idea to have performances at the event. This gave me confidence and I had more ideas. I work as a fitness instructor. And now when I do it I am able to improvise, because I have improved my general critical thinking I've been able to join things together. For example, I put the history together with the architecture, and I come up with an idea of how it relates. I did research on the Hackney site, and in Greenwich, I was more intrigued by what I could find out about the Olympics and the history of Greenwich and of Canary Wharf. The more I express my ideas in front of others, the more comfortable I feel. Before I would be shy and I would not input so much. I've definitely overcome it. I am better at research, at organising and general communication; I know how to present. I use this in my college work and it has made a difference.'



Team Achievements

'I couldn't work in a group before. I didn't like listening to other peoples' ideas that clashed with mine. I learnt that it's better if you get all of the big opinions into one pot.'

'When we went to EDAW meetings they talked to us like adults, and we wanted to go with good ideas. Everything we said, they used in their meetings, and they were talking to Boris Johnson and they made a big booklet with our ideas in it. There was some uproar: specific communities we thought would not really work, because you might get gangs in the Olympic parks with different communities clashing. Like there were really rich and poor areas and they could clash. When my friends talk rubbish about the Olympics, saying it is a waste of time, I talk to them about the things that will happen after. All my friends live like two minutes away. At the public event I felt like a star, it was fun and weird, because people were actually listening and it wasn't boring. All they heard about was the music and the food, but afterwards they wanted to know more about the Olympics. When I saw the visual thing on the floor with all the lights, showing the Olympic park made me realise how exciting it would be.'

Self Expression & Confidence

'I find it easier to get my words out. I have been expressing myself through talking, and creative stuff.'

'We are helping to build the biggest area of city since after the fire of London. I have contributed. We've made the planners think and realise that they're not from these areas, like Hackney and Waltham Forest, and they need our help to understand our area, and the people. Before; I went out (and) I would not talk to people. For example, if I bumped into someone, I would try to be invisible. Now I will ask on a bus, where it is going. That's from talking around a table. We made a sound-track, a good way to express yourself, to be heard in an interesting way, not just to come up with loads of facts. I am quite interested in politics, the history of politics, political science, geography, and people. This definitely helps, because you sit around conference tables talking about stuff for a very long time.'



Further Information

The Legacy Now Youth Panel programme 08/09 was convened by Fundamental Architectural Inclusion, on behalf of the London Development Agency and in partnership with the five host boroughs. The Legacy Youth Panel will continue to be run by Fundamental on behalf of the Olympic Park Legacy Company. For more information contact Jane Leighton on 020 8471 7929, jane@fundamental.uk.net or visit www.fundamental.uk.net/lnyp